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WORKING IN HARMONY: SOME EFFECTS OF MUSIC IN THE CLASSROOM

Anne Marie McGovern

An Action Research Project Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the School of Education in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Teaching and Leadership

Saint Xavier University and IRI/Skylight
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ABSTRACT

The objective of this research project is to observe some effects music has on the elementary classroom. This study was conducted with the third grade students throughout the first semester of the 1999-2000 school year. Music is a language with powerful appeal to children of all ages. Love of music may be an excellent strategy to assist and motivate children to learn. It is also important to note that children retain 24 percent of what they hear, 40 percent of what they see, and 70 percent of what they learn through multisensory experiences. The instructor explored strategies in which music might enhance the classroom learning environment.

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- Megan and Colleen, Mommy is finally back! Thanks for your understanding.
- Tinley 8, You are great! It's been a terrific 2 year journey. I'm glad I shared it with you!
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Classroom environment is one of the most important things that is almost completely within the educator's control. From the moment a student, parent, colleague or administrator walks in to a teacher's classroom they get a sense of the teacher priorities found there. Everything, especially in an elementary level classroom, speaks to the students. Educators are always aware of their surroundings, not only because it is important to the students but also because the teacher wants a nice place to go to everyday for work. Ideally, posters would be found on the wall that proclaim positive messages. Color would be everywhere and everything would be neat and clean.

Instructors may begin to realize that there is one other aspect of classroom environment that they may have all but ignored. That aspect is the use of music in both school curriculum and in the classroom. Harvard University's Howard Gardner wrote in Frames of Mind that "Music helps some people organize the way they think and work by helping them develop in other areas, such as Math, Language, and Spatial Reasoning" (as cited in Black 1997, p. 21). Joyce M. Kelstrom, a music educator in Elmhurst, Illinois wrote, "Music is an art, a discipline, a language and a vehicle of instruction" (1998, p. 38). Another educator who agrees that the arts are important in a school's curriculum is Principal Chris Forehan. He stated, "The arts are used deliberately to hook student interest and increase self-confidence" (1998, p. 36).

Some educators have experimented using music specifically in the classroom setting. A study conducted by Rauscher, Shaw and Ky (1993) revealed that using music, mostly from the

classical or Baroque period, could help increase a college student's test scores and focus. This study came to be known in the educational field as "The Mozart Effect." A fifth grade teacher in a small rural school, Kay Gardner, used classical background music and noticed that with the music on, her students settled down quickly, stayed on task, and went about their schoolwork in a calm and relaxed manner (1997, p. 22). Finally, Diane Langfit, a reading specialist in Alaska, stated that "Music is a powerful medium that educators can and should incorporate into their classrooms.... A familiar or simple melody included in a book that students read and write assures success" (1994, p. 430).

Informal inquiry revealed that some colleagues have tried playing Baroque music softly in the background as they were teaching. Some found it to be distracting to their students, others found that the music really did help students to focus. Music is a language with powerful appeal to children of all ages. "The enthusiasm displayed and the eagerness to sing and move with the beat reflect a child's natural propensity toward music" (Kolb, 1996, p. 76). Children's love of music seemed to be an excellent strategy to assist and at the same time motivate children to learn. Dale Mann had noted that music in the classroom "educates, captivates, and lures children into a richer academic world" (as cited in Collett, 1991, p.42). With an increased awareness of how the use of multiple intelligences helps the learner understand, it is important to note that "Children retain 24 percent of what they hear, 40 percent of what they see, and 70 percent of what they learn through multisensory experiences" (as cited in Collett, 1991, p.42). It makes sense to implement as many strategies as possible to reach a student.

The knowledge that students needed music in the general curriculum goes back as far as the early 1900s. Will Earhart, president of what is now known as the Music Educators National Conference, stated "that music enhances knowledge in the areas of mathematics, science,

geography, history, foreign language, physical education and vocational training"(as cited in Morrison, 1994, p.33). Music could be used in multiple ways to make the school day more stimulating to students. Music could be used to relax and calm students after gym or recess. It could be used to give them an audio cue as to the volume they should maintain during group work. In addition, music could be an excellent way of drawing attention to a pivotal point in the lesson. Background music was yet another way that music might be used in the classroom.

Students experience different emotions throughout the school day. Music is known to help shape and define a mood or a feeling. Therefore, music can profitably be used to shift the states of mind of both teacher and students. Musical selections could assist a teacher in enhancing desired learner outcomes (DePorter, et al., 1999).

This action research study focuses to what extent music could enhance classroom environment and climate at the elementary level. The study investigates how students reacted to the varieties of music that they would hear throughout the day. Was it distracting for them? Was it calming? Did it give them energy? Finally, to what extent did the music seem to impact student behavior, classroom management, and student attitude? These questions were the guiding forces for this research.

CHAPTER TWO

PROBLEM EVIDENCE

The classroom environment needs to be an atmosphere where students are interested and motivated to learn. Educators are constantly looking for ways in which they could create an environment that attains this goal. The focus of this paper intended to determine to what extent adding music to the general classroom environment might enhance the learning process and affect classroom climate.

School Demographics

This project was conducted in a K-6 suburban elementary school. According to the most recent data published in 1997, this school was composed of 91.4% Black, 6.9% White and 1.7% Hispanic. The percentage of low-income students was 61.5% compared to the average of 36.3% in the state. Class size for third grade classes was virtually identical to the state average of 23.2. Teachers in this south suburban school district were comprised of 68.1% White, 30.1% Black, and 1.8% Hispanic as compared to 84.8% White, 11.3% Black and 3.1% Hispanic as the state average. The breakdown of male and female teachers was also different from the state average. This district had 11.7% Male and 88.3% Female against the state average of 24.8% Male and 75.2% Female. Teachers in this district with a Master's degree and above was 33.1% as opposed to 49.5% commonly found in large elementary school districts. According to the latest Illinois Goal Assessment Program (IGAP) scores, this school obtained a score of 213 in Reading as compared to the State average of 246. A school score of 14.9 was reported in Writing, compared to a state score of 18.7. Finally, 35% of this school's third graders did not meet state goals in Reading, where 28% of students throughout the state did not meet the state

goals. In Writing, 49% of third grade students in this school did not meet state goals, where only 13% of students throughout the state did not meet state goals.

Academic Profile

As noted in the latest School Report Card, the students in this district are far below where they should be in many subjects tested through IGAP. A majority of the students could be considered at-risk based on low-income socio-economic status and low standardized test scores. Note, for example, almost two-thirds of the students were designated low-income and over a quarter did not meet state Reading goals. It was further noted that almost half the third grade students did not meet the state Writing goals (see pp. 2-3). It has been shown that the use of various modalities is particularly successful for at-risk students (Collett, 1991).

Since at-risk students seemed to be a large population in this school it is important to note that the use of various modalities is particularly successful for at-risk students (Collett,1991). It was interesting to see if the use of music in the classroom would increase their attention and focus. An important outcome of the study was to clarify conflicting findings as to whether music helps or distracts students in their learning. The types of music used will probably differ from the types of music the students are used to listening to. Most students in this class like to listen to Hip-Hop or Rap music. We used classical music. To what degree might classical music affect the findings?

Behavioral Profile

Exact interventions for including music procedures into the classroom environment are outlined in the following chapter. These interventions were used with the expectation that they would enhance the classroom environment. The strategies would hopefully positively impact specific problem areas. The primary area would be the improvement of student time spent on-

task. Typically, the educator noticed the long length of time the students were taking to change from one subject to another. The study focused upon ascertaining both student responses and any improvements in behavior and climate using these strategies.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Class Demographics

The implementation of including musical procedures into the classroom was concentrated on a third grade class in an elementary school district. This class consisted of 18 students. Within this classroom there were 7 boys and 11 girls. The study was conducted throughout the first semester or 18 weeks of the 1999-2000 school year. In the beginning of the year the teacher had the students fill out a survey of their attitudes toward music. Parents were also informally asked their opinion of music specifically within the classroom environment.

Action Plan

This study was separated into three distinct categories. The categories were Climate/Management, Motivation, and Learning/Skills. These categories were further broken down into subsections. These included an explanation of the category and, if necessary, a definition of the term. Another section includes an example of the type of music that was played to achieve results within the category. Finally, an explanation of activities during the specific weeks throughout the semester that category is presented.

Classroom Climate/Management (weeks 3,4,5 and 6). The first way of using music in the classroom was to improve classroom climate or environment. "The key features of the environment are these: the degree of structure, the physical environment, the organization of learning, and the social relationships in the classroom" (Glatthorn, 1992). As was stated in Chapter One, classroom climate and environment is important to students in order to learn more effectively.

Music is a strategy that the researcher employed to positively enhance the classroom climate. While this had been found to be successful in other classrooms, it had yet to be implemented in the present situation. Classical music was used as background music while the teacher was instructing or students were working. This was the focus of Week Four. This music was used at a very low volume that could really only be heard when the room was completely quiet. Selections from the Baroque period were used. This type of music was used because "Research shows that learning is easier when the learner is in a relaxed receptive state. The heartbeat of a relaxed individual is 60-80 beats per minute. Much of baroque music closely matches the relaxed heartbeat of a human being in an optimal learning condition" (as cited in DePorter, et al., 1999 p.76).

Music can help to shift states of mind. People listen to different music when they are in different moods. Weeks Five and Six, the instructor experimented with using music which could help effect mood transition. The instructor used a Teacher Observation Checklist (Appendix A) to see if certain music was instrumental in calming and relaxing the students down after lunch or recess. She also used a Teacher Observation Checklist (Appendix B) to observe if up-tempo music was able to energize students who were tired or listless.

Classroom management was another important issue relative to classroom climate. Good classroom management is key to establishing an enjoyable working environment. Behavior issues could either positively or negatively affect the classroom. Many times classroom management was done verbally. Nonverbal cues for classroom management was employed to expand the management strategies. For example, a clapping rhythm was employed to clear off desks.

During Week Three of the study, rhythm was introduced as a classroom management technique. Students were taught a rhythm that they would associate with the instructor needing their attention. The instructor would perform the rhythm. As students became aware of the rhythm they would perform it with the teacher. Eventually all students were supposed to join in participating in the rhythm. This allowed the students to become focused and ready to move on.

Week Six introduced a technique of using instrumental music while children were involved in cooperative groups. The instructor would play instrumental music and would inform the students that they should always be able to hear the music. This would keep their voices low enough so they could hear the music. When the instructor needed the attention of the class, the volume was turned up very loud and then down to zero. This was intended to be an excellent nonverbal cue to attract the attention of the students.

Motivation (Weeks 7 and 8). Increasing motivation was the second category in which music was used in the classroom. Motivation is especially important for at-risk populations. The children needed to believe that they could do well. They also needed to want to do well. Weeks Seven and Eight would be when the theme of using motivational music would be introduced. To begin the day on a good note is important for learning to take place.

To motivate students as they came into the classroom positive songs were played. The songs would be uplifting and dwell on how special all children are. This would get the day off a to a positive start. To be reminded of the uniqueness of everyone would be a great way to start the day. The music that was used for these times of the day would be from the "Chicken Soup for the Soul" series of recordings. Beginning the day on a positive note would hopefully increase the students' motivation.

Learning/Skills (Weeks 9 and 10). The final category that music was to be used in the classroom was intended to assist them in learning and skills. The use of music to learn specific skills should help the student who learns with the musical intelligence. This would be a fun way to learn and remember important (but tedious) facts or concepts.

Rhythm spelling was implemented during Week Nine. The class noted the spelling pattern of the lesson. The instructor would make up a rhythm that the class could use to assist in the mastery of their spelling words. For example, if the pattern of the week was "ou", the rhythm might be something like ABOUT. Clap to say the word. Clap on the A, clap on the B, stamp your left foot on the O, stamp your right foot on the U, and clap on the T. The teacher would teach the rhythm on Monday. The class continued to practice the rhythm throughout the week. On Thursday, students would be allowed to use the rhythm quietly when they were involved in that week's Spelling Bee, and also when they took their test on Friday. The intent was to make learning spelling words much more enjoyable.

The instructor used songs to teach students specific skills during Week Ten. Songs were taught that would encourage students to remember vowel sounds. Another example would be a song to teach them the steps of how to add or subtract when they needed to regroup. This strategy would enable them to remember critical information in a fun, easy to remember way.

The three categories of Classroom Climate and Management, Motivation, and Skill Learning would enhance the environment of this third grade class. After each style was introduced, they were to be used again as needed. The remaining four weeks of the semester a concentrated use of a variety of the strategies listed above were implemented.

The students were given a survey (Appendix C-I) to fill out. The survey answered questions about what (if anything) they liked about the strategy, what (if anything) they did not

like about the strategy. Should the strategy be continued? Finally, a question that had to do with the targeted objective for each strategy was included.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND EXPLANATIONS

Strategy implementation ended December 17,1999. This date was the last day of school before the winter break. Results suggested that the project really helped to motivate students, and to help get students on-task quicker. The music also seemed to enhance the classroom environment on many levels. Results, presented below, clearly show what the children thought of the many strategies that were implemented during the first semester.

Initial Music Survey and Results

The first survey given to the students was a Music Survey (Appendix C). This survey gave the instructor information as to the musical likes and dislikes of the students. Results were divided into four categories: Rap, Rhythm and Blues, Other (Gospel, Rock), more than One (see Figure 1).

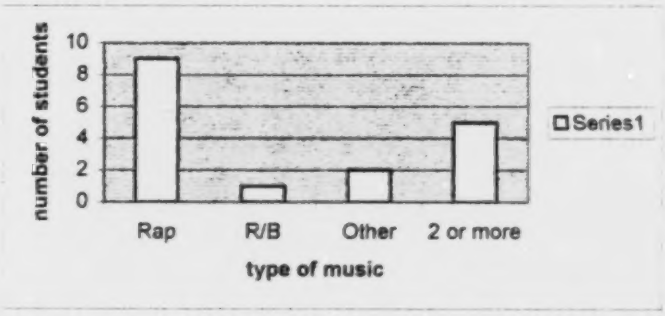

Figure 1: Student Opinion of Favorable Music

Of the seventeen surveys returned, a majority of the students listed Rap as their favorite music. One student listed Rhythm and Blues as a favorite. Two students listed Gospel and Rock as their favorites and quite a few students listed more than one type as their favorite. This was

very helpful to the instructor to give baseline knowledge of student preferences when it came to music.

Another part of the survey asked for students to state what music they do not like to listen to. There was a clear majority in this question also. Seven of seventeen students listed Classical as the music they did not like to listen to. Other music cited only applied to one or two students. Finally, four students listed specific songs that they did not like (see Figure 2).

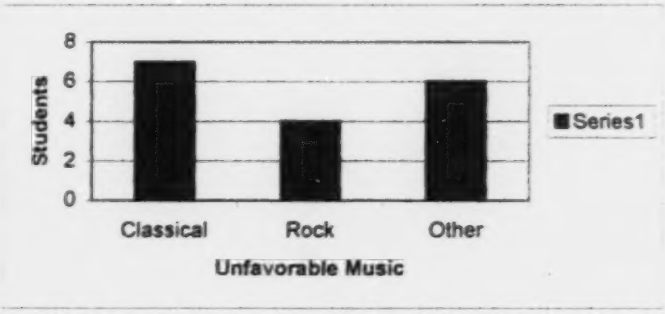

Figure 2: Students Negative Music Response

The last part of this initial survey questioned students on whether or not they liked to listen to music, and if they thought music could help them to learn. All seventeen respondents

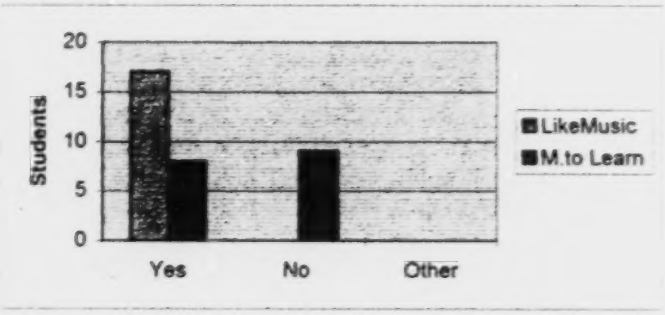

Figure 3: Music Survey Results

returned their surveys stating that they liked to listen to music. Eight students thought that music could be used to help them learn. The majority of the students (9) felt that music could not help them learn (see Figure 3).

Intervention Results

The survey revealed what kind of music would motivate the students. It also showed that overwhelmingly the students in the class enjoyed listening to music. It was interesting to note that most students did not think of music as a learning strategy.

Clapping Rhythm Survey and Results

The next survey (Appendix D) was on the use of the clapping rhythm that the instructor employed when the class was changing from one subject to another. Eighteen students responded to this survey. It is apparent from the graph (see Figure 4)

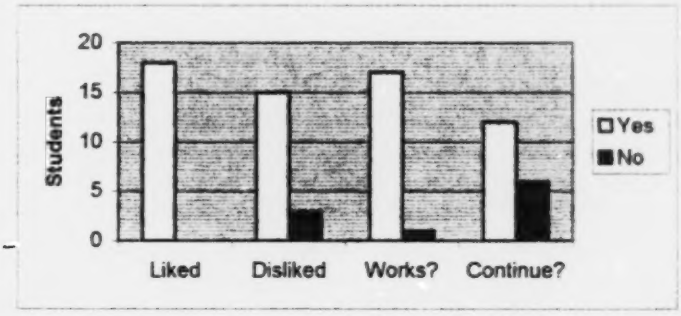

Figure 4: Student Responses to the Clapping Rhythm

that all eighteen students found reasons to like the clapping rhythm. The reasons some students gave were, "helping to let them know when the teacher wanted your attention ... When time was up for my work, and it makes us listen". Other positives included, "I liked the beat" and, "It is fun to clap and make rhythm."

Fifteen of the eighteen students had reasons they didn't like the Clapping Rhythm (see Figure 4). Some of those reasons were "Because when she starts you have to rush to put your things away quickly ... It rushes you ... It was hard to do at first ... I do not like shoving stuff into my desk." Other reasons included that the rhythm "hurt my hands and legs."

Included in Figure 4 were the results of the questions "Do you think it works?" and "Should we continue using it this year?" Seventeen students agreed that it worked while only one did not think it worked. Interestingly, that person did not put a reason for why they did not feel it did not work. Twelve students stated they wanted to continue using this strategy for the remainder of the year. Those that did not want to continue gave reasons such as," A lot of people can't finish on time."

Clean-Up Song and Results

Seventeen students returned the next survey (Appendix E). This survey dealt with a song that was used when students cleaned out their desks. The teacher observed that when the

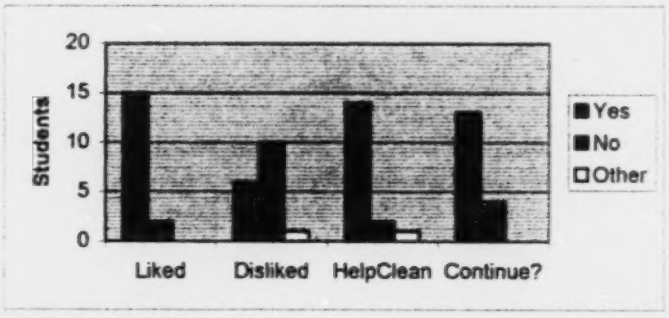

Figure 5: Student Response to the Clean Up song

students cleaned out their desks it turned into a chaotic time in the class. Some students would

finish ahead of time and not know what to do with themselves. Others would take a long time to clean out their desks. This song was to alleviate those problems of classroom management. The song that was chosen was the Macarena. This song was used because of its fast pace but also because the students were familiar with the dance that accompanies the song. Figure 5 shows the results of the student surveys.

Fifteen students found reasons they liked using The Macarena to clean out their desks. The responses ranged from "When your done you can do the Macarena!" to "It helped me know when to hurry up, so I would have time to dance." One student even responded that "I liked that we got to get our desks clean faster." This question prompted some negative comments, such as "Nothing really, because I don't like the song"or, "I did not like anything."

The next question asked about what they don't like about using the song to clean out our desks. Ten students responded that there was nothing they didn't like about it. Six students responded that there were aspects of this strategy that did not appeal to them. One of them stated that he didn't like "the motion." Another student didn't like "the girls jumping around." A majority of the negative comments were actually positive for the purpose of the strategy. Comments such as, "When the song stops then we have to stop" or, "At the end it has to go off" are considered by the researcher to be more supportive of the strategy. There was one comment that the researcher found ironic. The comment was found in the "didn't like" column. "It helps us clean our desks better." This is precisely what the teacher was trying to achieve! The graph also includes one student in the "other" category. This student's response was illegible and could not be used.

Question Three dealt with the music's ability to help the student's clean out their desks. Of the seventeen respondents, fourteen agreed that the music did help them to clean out their

desks. Many of the remarks were similar to this one. "Yes, because it makes me want to hurry." The negative comments to this question were from two students. They wrote, "No, because the girls were dancing around the room and I can't put garbage in the can," and "No, it doesn't work." There was also a student who left the question blank. This is the one student who is shown in the "other" column.

The final question in the survey asked if we should continue using this method when we clean out our desks. Thirteen out of seventeen thought this strategy should continue for the remainder of the year. Four out of seventeen didn't think it should continue. The majority of the surveys came back with simply a Yes or a No in the space.

Rhythm Spelling Survey and Results

The next survey sampled the "Rhythm Spelling" strategy that was employed with the expectation that this would bring enjoyment to the students when they study their spelling words each week (Appendix F). The results of the survey were also placed into a bar graph for

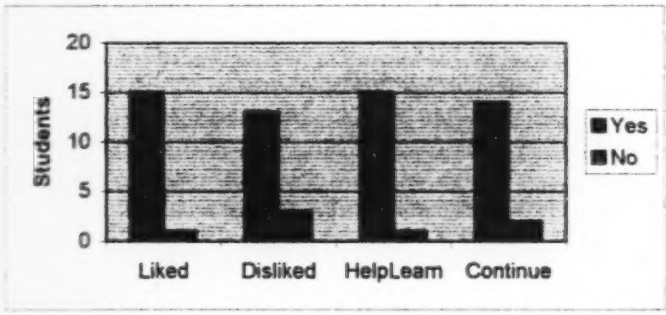

Figure 6: Student Responses to Rhythm Spelling

ease in referring to the results (Figure 6).

The initial question asked them what they liked about "Rhythm Spelling". Of the sixteen students that responded, fifteen found reasons that they liked it. One did not find any reasons to like the strategy. The examples of positive responses were," The rhythm ... It's fun to do ... It was easy and, " I like when we clap and stamp our feet." The one negative response was simply, " Nothing really." One comment from this section that the teacher thought was interesting was "If I forget how to spell words I can think of the rhythm." This response showed that the rhythm was able to help some students remember how to spell their words.

The next section was about what they didn't like about "Rhythm Spelling." Thirteen responses came back with reasons they didn't like the strategy. Some of the negative responses were "It takes too long", and "People go too fast." Others didn't like the rhythm used or "doing crazy dances." Three students stated that there was nothing about Rhythm Spelling that they didn't like.

Question Three asked students if Rhythm Spelling helped them to learn their words easier and to explain why or why not. Fifteen responded that it did help them to learn their words. "Yes,because I know my words now ... Yes,because it helped me win the spelling bee... Yes it did because I get As on my Spelling tests now." The one negative response received on this question was very to the point: "Really, I didn't get the point."

The final question asked whether the strategy should continue or stop. Fourteen responded that they would like us to continue Rhythm Spelling. Two decided they didn't want to do it anymore. Once again, many students did not give a reason for their answers. A few students who did give reasons are, "Yes, because it helped me ... Yes, because it is good for us and because it helped us ... Yes, because we can concentrate." Two students who did not want to continue did not give reasons.

Positive Morning Music Survey and Results

The next strategy that was surveyed was about the use of the Positive Morning Music in the class as the students walked into the classroom. The music continued to be played while the students got out their homework and wrote in their Journals. This survey (Appendix G), consisted of four questions to gauge their reactions to the music. Figure 7 displays the results of

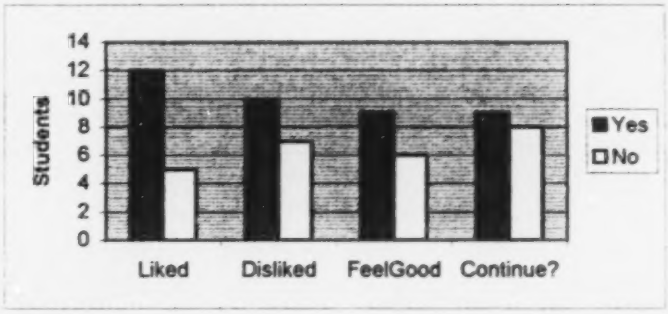

Figure 7: Student Responses to Positive Morning Music

the survey.

The first question was what they liked about the Positive Morning Music. Seventeen students responded to this survey. Twelve students stated reasons that they like the music. Some of their responses were "I just like the music ... It makes me feel good ... It was relaxing ... It helped me with my Journal." Some of the five students who didn't find any positive reasons for the music said, "It sometimes distracted me" and "I feel like it is too early. Please turn it off." One student wrote a negative answer in this column that the researcher considered positive, "I hate that I can't hear it and I like it a little bit."

The second question asked the children what they didn't like about the music playing in the morning. Ten out of 17 had reasons to put in this section. Many of the responses came back saying "That my teacher doesn't turn it up louder." Other responses indicated that they didn't like the songs being played. "It is slow music" and, "I didn't like it because it was boring a lot." One student responded that "It makes my head hurt!"

Did the music make you "feel good about yourself" was the next question asked. Nine students stated that it did, while six students said it did not. Of the nine students that said it did help them feel good about themselves, some of the comments were "Yes the music made me feel good because they are nice songs." Of the seven that said it didn't help them, responses included "It was too boring," and "No, I am trying to do my work".

The question of whether or not the class should continue with this Positive Morning Music was almost split down the middle. Slightly more felt we should continue, while eight students felt we should stop. No reasons were given either way about continuing or stopping.

Classical Music Survey and Results

The next survey was the one that the researcher was most anxious to receive. The survey

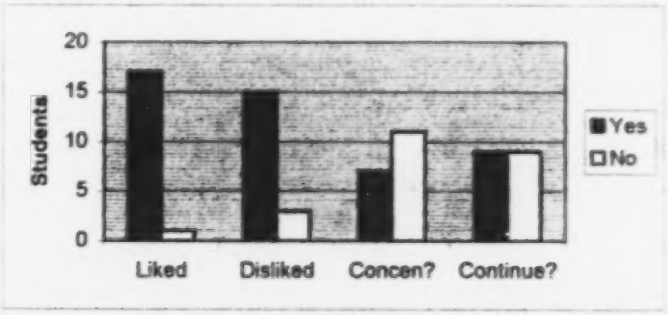

Figure 8: Student Responses to Classical Music in the Classroom

was about classical music. Of the 18 who responded to the survey, 17 students found reasons to like the music. Only one student couldn't find a reason to like the music. Some of the positive

responses were, "I like the violin ...I like the music because it is soft and it makes me do more work ... I like it because it helps me to work ... It helps me think ... It sounds nice." The one negative comment from this section said, "I don't like it because I will fall asleep."

The next question was about reasons disliked for using the music in the classroom. Fifteen out of the eighteen students found reasons to dislike it. Three students couldn't find a reason to dislike it. Some of the comments were "It takes too long until the song is over ... I don't like that kind of music ... It does not sound right,"and "I don't like that kind of music. It is stupid to me." Others commented "I do not like it because it is not louder ... What I don't like about it is my teacher plays it too low." One student wrote "I like everything." The strategy seemed to have a positive effect on the students..

The third question asked the children if it helped them to concentrate on their work. Seven out of the 18 students said it did help them to concentrate. While 11 out of 18 said it did not. The students who decided the music did help them concentrate said, "Yes it does. Why is because the music is good ... Yes because it helps me get more into my work ... Yes I think it helps me to concentrate. It makes it quiet in the room." The students who disagreed stated that "No, because it makes me listen to the music too much... No, when I hear this I get side tracked," and "No because it does not have a beat."

The final question was whether or not we should continue using the music. The responses showed an equal showing for and against. Nine thought we should continue, while nine thought we should stop. The comments on the positive side were " Yes because I want the music to go through my ears ... Yes, because I like the songs," and "Yes, because I want to keep up the good work." The students who did not want to continue stated that, " No, because it is

too loud and distracting and I can't work good ... No, because I don't like it," and " No, I'm tired of hearing it."

Motivating Music Survey and Results

The next survey was about the use of motivating or energizing music in the classroom. The music that was played on these times was music that the students had already stated they had an appeal for (See Appendix I).

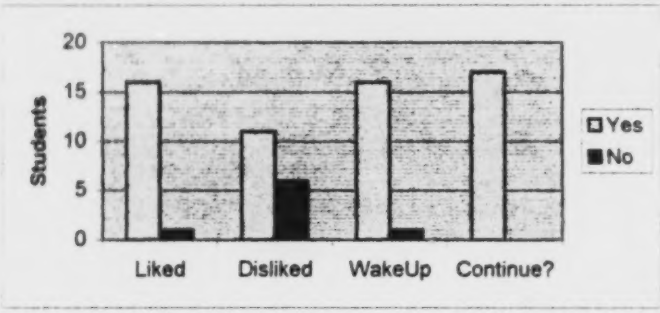

Figure 9: Student Responses to Motivating Music

The first question was "What did you like about using the Jock Jam music in the classroom?" Seventeen students responded to this question (See Figure 9).

Sixteen of them found reasons they liked the music. One student did not. The students that liked using this music stated "It makes me motivated and wakes me up ...I like the Jock Jam music because it makes me feel happy... It is fun." Many of them also stated that they like it because they could dance. The one student who did not like it stated that " I do not like anything because people dance."

The next question was " What didn't you like about using this kind of music in the classroom. Eleven out of 17 found reasons while six did not. Some of the students who found

reasons to dislike the music stated, " The girls get all excited and dance ... That it rushes you... It is too loud." Those on the other side stated, " I don't like when my teacher turns it off," or simply wrote "Nothing".

Thirdly, "Did the music wake you up?" Sixteen students agreed that it did "wake them up," while only one student said it did not. Most of the reasons given for waking them up were " It helped me because it sounded great! ... Yes, because it is loud." The one person who said it did not help to wake him up said, "No. It did not wake me up because it isn't loud enough."

Finally, the last question asked if they wanted to continue using this music the rest of the year. All seventeen students said that Yes, they wanted to continue. Most stated they wanted it to continue because "I really like the music" and "It sounds like my music".

The study can be concluded with the findings that these specific strategies to integrate music into an elementary education classroom were well received by this population of students. The students enjoyed most of them and so did the teacher.

Discussion

This action research was generally successful. The instructor felt that through observation and the surveys the students enjoyed most of the strategies attempted. The first three graphs displayed the results of the initial survey. The researcher expected the results reflected. The interesting part about the results was that students were not given a list of music to reference when they were filling out the survey. That's why the seven out of 18 students who chose Classical as the music they didn't like was so unexpected. When you look at the graph (Figure 8), and see how many students liked something about using classical music in the classroom it is very exciting. This population of students favored Rap as their favorite kind of music. It is exciting to see that the students were able to put aside their preconceptions and give classical

music a try. Most found that they actually enjoyed it. Even more interesting is that the class was split 50/50 as to whether we should continue using the music in the classroom.

There were four strategies the students really seemed to enjoy. The clapping rhythm (Figure 4), the clean-up song (Figure 5), rhythm spelling (Figure 6) and the motivating music (Figure 9). The common denominator in these four strategies was the fact that the children were, in most cases, encouraged to get out of their seats and move!

The clapping rhythm was the only one of the four where the students were to remain in their seats. The children enjoyed this non-verbal cue, letting them know to put their things away. They join in as soon as they put their things away. It took awhile for this strategy to be implemented, since a rhythm that was fun needed to be taught. Once picked up, they had a great time. It worked wonderfully. It is so much better than trying to talk over them to get attention. A great thing about it is when someone else happens to be in the class when we do this. The children love to show off what they can do. Parents have been amazed that doing something fun can actually work to get students back on task.

The clean up song is something the children looked forward to. Most children are familiar with the song "The Macarena." They are also familiar with the dance that goes with it. The instructor thought this would be a great way to instill a controlled chaos in the room at desk cleaning time. The children had to be finished cleaning their desks before they could do the dance. This really hurried them up! There wasn't any unnecessary talking. The children had big smiles on their faces when they got to stand up and do the dance with their friends. When the song was over just about everyone was finished. This strategy has continued to work throughout the year.

Rhythm spelling was another strategy the students liked. They have a good time learning the rhythm and for those that have a musical intelligence this works very well. Putting the words to a beat makes the boring task of memorizing words fun. This was another strategy that encouraged students to get up and move. They are out of their seats and having fun. It is, however, difficult to think of a different rhythm each week. The children kept asking when we were going to do it again so it has been continued.

Motivating music was used in the afternoons when the students were beginning to grow restless and unfocused. Students get out of their seats and do a line dance together from a song that is similar to a rap style song. They have a good time and the five minutes it took to do it paid off the remainder of the day. Figure 9 displays that all the students wish to continue this practice. Obviously, they enjoyed it immensely.

The instructor had anticipated that these would be successful strategies with the children, and was generally proven correct. These activities only take a few minutes out of the day and really help promote a positive classroom environment that is so vital to a child's performance.

The only strategy that didn't seem successful was the positive morning music. Figure 7 shows that the majority of the children liked it, but also that almost that same number had a reason they didn't like it. This seemed to be a case of where students didn't quite know what to make of it. The class was also split on wanting to continue with the strategy or end it. Many children felt the music was "too slow and boring". The researcher played this slow music purposely to help the students ease into the day. Apparently it didn't have the desired effect.

Recommendations

The researcher suggests some recommendations to any professional that wishes to try these strategies and activities in their own classroom. These recommendations might help produce positive results with the students.

First, CDs can be quite costly. Ways to avoid the expense are to find several of them at your local library. They have a wide variety to choose from and this gives the teacher the opportunity to listen to it for a week or two and then decide if it is worth purchasing. A teacher can also borrow from someone who has an extensive CD collection. The researcher cautions not to try to get everything at once. Gradually obtaining CDs that are proven to work for your student population is much better than having a quantity of music.

The experience of using classical music in the classroom engenders another recommendation. Some students get very distracted using the music in the background while testing. This researcher will adapt the strategy to reflect this. The music would be played when there is other noise in the classroom. Classical music will only be played when the teacher is teaching and the students are doing group work. When students are testing, the teacher should leave the music off.

When using any of the four strategies that get the children up and moving, the teacher needs to make sure students understand the rules and limits. These strategies would be recommended only if there is good discipline in your classroom.

A final recommendation is to do what would work for you. The music should not run a classroom.

Conclusion

This project was an interesting one to choose. This instructor had not really used music before in the classroom. The students enjoyed it but so did the teacher! These strategies will be added to the instructor's arsenal of teaching methods to implement in future years. They were found to be effective and positive to all involved.

A final anecdote can be used to pull together the project. When the teacher asked the students to list all the ways in which music was used in the classroom this year, the students wrote up lists. When the teacher collected the lists it was apparent that the students had come up with many ways. Upon closer examination, the instructor noticed that some of the strategies did not use music. Some of the activities mentioned were Jeopardy, and learning the names of the first twelve presidents. The teacher informed the children that music was not used in these activities. The students replied that they thought we did use music during those activities because they were fun! This comment said it all. The children thought everything we did that they enjoyed was because music was somehow involved. From this, the researcher considers this action research project to be a success.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Teacher Checklist for Relaxation

	Yes	No	How long?	Comments
Stop Talking				
Come in Quietly				
Listen to Music				
Move Slower				

Appendix B: Teacher Checklist for Energy

	Yes	No	How long did it take?	Comments
Smile on their face				
Look around at the others				
Appear alert				
Begin talking excitedly				
Get up and Move!				

Appendix C:

Music Survey

1. Do you like to listen to music?

2. What kinds do you listen to?

3. Do you think you can use music to help you to learn?

4. What music do you NOT like very much? Why?

Appendix D:

The Clapping Rhythm

1. What do you like about using the clapping rhythm to get your attention?

2. What don't you like about using the clapping rhythm ?

3. Do you think it works or it doesn't work?

4. Would you like us to continue using it in the class this year or stop?

Appendix E:

Clean-Up Song

1. What did you like about listening to the "Macarena" while cleaning out our desks?

2. What didn't you like about using the "Macarena" when we cleaned out our desks?

3. Did the music help you to clean out your desks? How?

4. Should we continue to use the "Macarena" when we are cleaning out our desks?

Appendix F:

Rhythm Spelling

1. What do you like about rhythm spelling?

2. What don't you like about rhythm spelling?

3. Did rhythm spelling help you to learn your words easier? Why or why not?

4. Should we continue to do rhythm spelling?

Appendix G:

Positive Morning Music

1. What did you like about listening to the songs that played when you come in the door in the morning?

2. What didn't you like about the morning music?

3. Did the music help you to feel good about yourself? Why or why not?

4. Should we continue to use this music?

Appendix H:

Classical Music

1. What do you like about having the classical music playing in the background as we work?

2. What don't you like about using classical music in the background as we work?

3. Do you think it helps you to concentrate or not? Why?

4. Would you like us to continue using it in class this year? Why or why not?

Appendix I:

Motivating Music

1. What did you like about using the faster "Jock Jam" music in the classroom?

2. What didn't you like about using this kind of music in the classroom?

3. Did this music help to "wake you up"?

4. Should we continue to use the "Jock Jam" music this year?